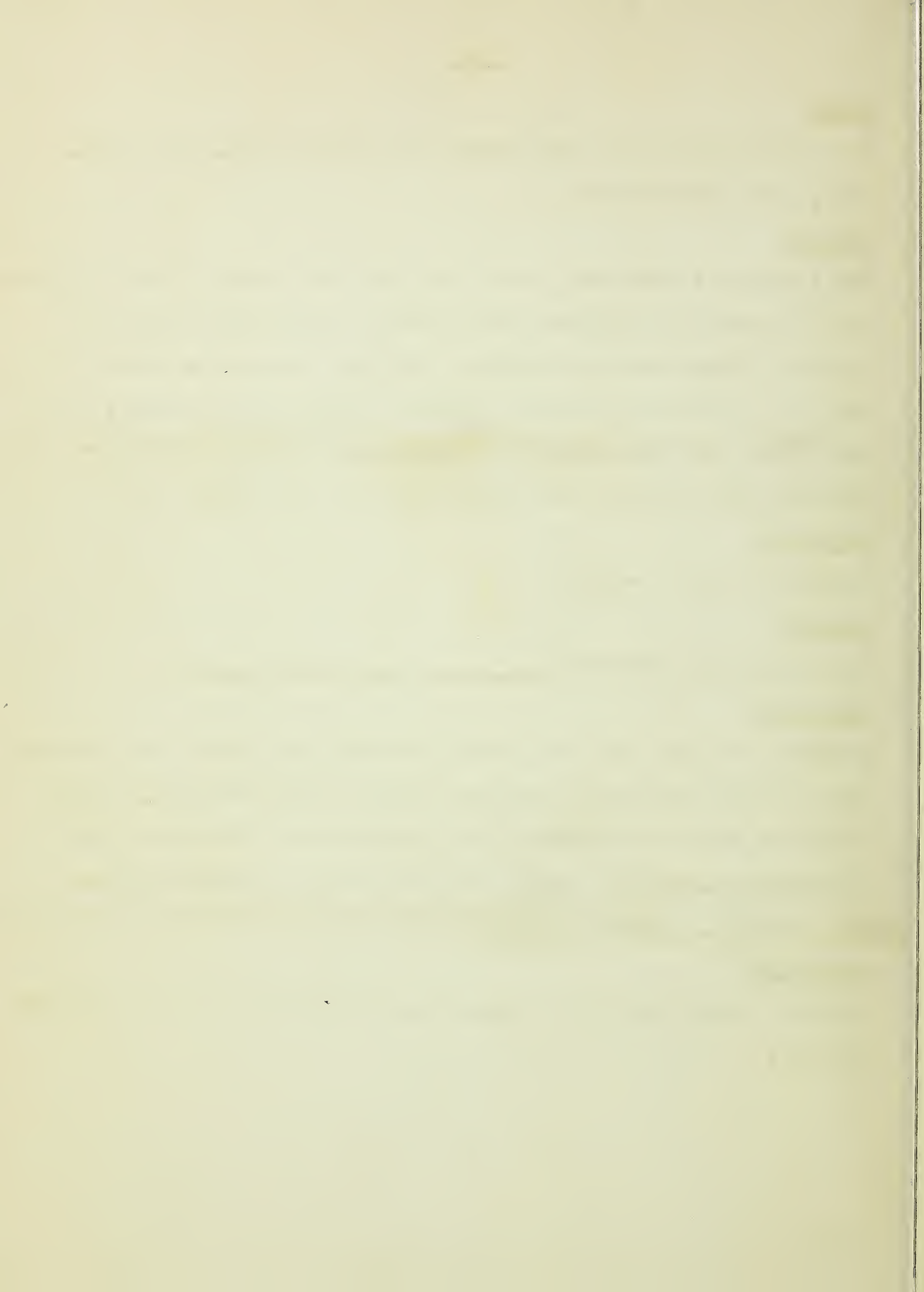


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F O R T U N E S    W A S H E D    A W A Y

"WORK ON PUBLIC LANDS"

Broadcast No. 25 in a series  
of discussions of soil con-  
servation in the Ohio Valley.

WLW, Cincinnati

October 15, 1938 6:00-6:15 p.m.

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE  
Dayton, Ohio



SOUND: Thunder, followed by rain...

ANNOUNCER

Fortunes Washed Away!

ORGAN: I GET THE BLUES WHEN IT RAINS.

ANNOUNCER

Soil erosion, no respecter of persons, eats away at the land and, like rain, descends upon the just and the unjust alike. And the farm managers of Ohio's twenty-two penal, correctional, and charitable institutions have found that out. For soil erosion has been eating chunks and slices out of Ohio's state-owned lands...

SOUND: Farm tractor...

BOY

It's no use, Mr. Mac. She won't pull it across those gullies.

MAC

We...ll, I dunno what we'll do. I've been trying to figger it out for years. We get these fields all leveled off nice and smooth, and then one of these big rains cuts them full of those blamed little gullies.

SOUND: Tractor cuts off.

MAC

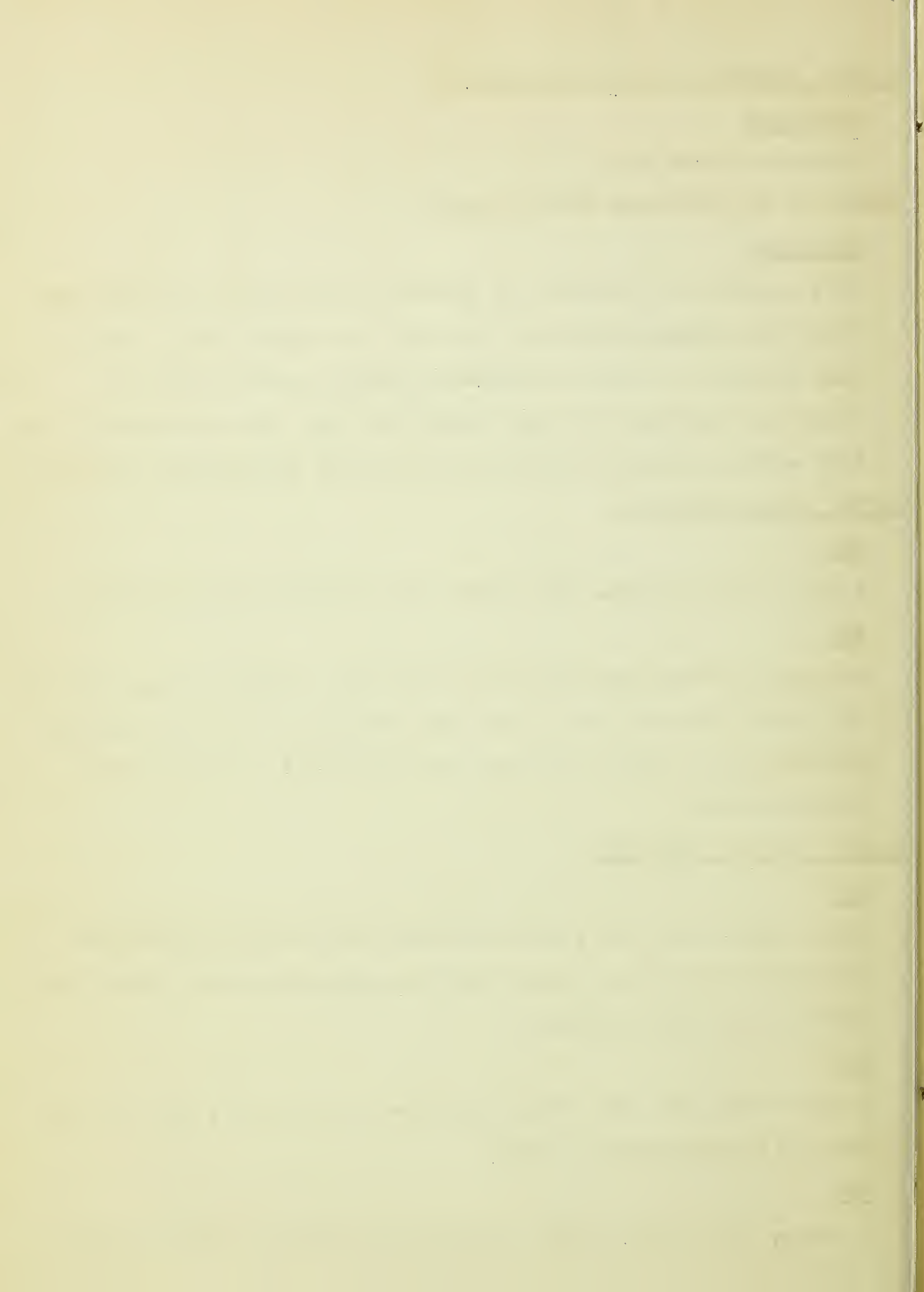
Well, take it in, Mike, and tell Frank we'll have to plow this field with the horses. Can't have the tractor getting stuck every time we cross the gullies.

BOY

I agree with you. But there oughta be some way, Mr. Mac, to keep this soil from washing so bad.

MAC

I dunno. It's steep land, and this soil seems to wash so easy.



BOY

Oh, well, I'd better get this tractor on down to the barn.

SOUND: Tractor starts and idles...

BOY

Anyhow, Mr. Mac, there's more soil underneath. We can just level this field again next year.

MAC

You're wrong there, son. You forget that we put fertilizer on this field every year. When that washes away, it's just like money down the creek.

BOY

I did see how it washed the manure all out of those gullies.

MAC

Yeah...I don't know what to do.

ORGAN: WHAT'LL I DO?

ANNOUNCER

For thirty years N. C. McLeod fought erosion on that field farmed by young men at the Boys' Industrial School near Lancaster, Ohio. Each year he saw the gardens slashed with gullies, big and little, each year he saw his fields washing toward the Hocking River. But last March, John Bragg, chief agriculturist of the Ohio Department of Public Welfare, called a conference of his farm managers. They met at Zanesville, at a soil conservation experiment station. In a downpour of rain...

SOUND: Gentle rain...

SOUND: Conversation...







WOODBURN

Now, let's stop here a minute. It's pretty wet but I want you men to notice the size and cover of these plots. See that farthest one.....

MAC

Yeah.

WOODBURN

It's only one third as long as this one. And you notice that one in grass there. This one has a four-year rotation of corn, wheat, meadow, meadow. This one.....

MAC

....gullied, isn't it?

WOODBURN

....yes, this has been in corn continuously. Now, let's go inside the plot house and see how the water and soil wash off these plots.

SOUND: Men walking down concrete steps, then sloshing inside, as patter of rain gives way to a few large streams of water splashing into a tank of water.

MAC

Gosh, look at the mud in that water.

SOUND: Men commenting.

WOODBURN

Yeah, that's coming off the plot that's been continuously in corn.

MAC

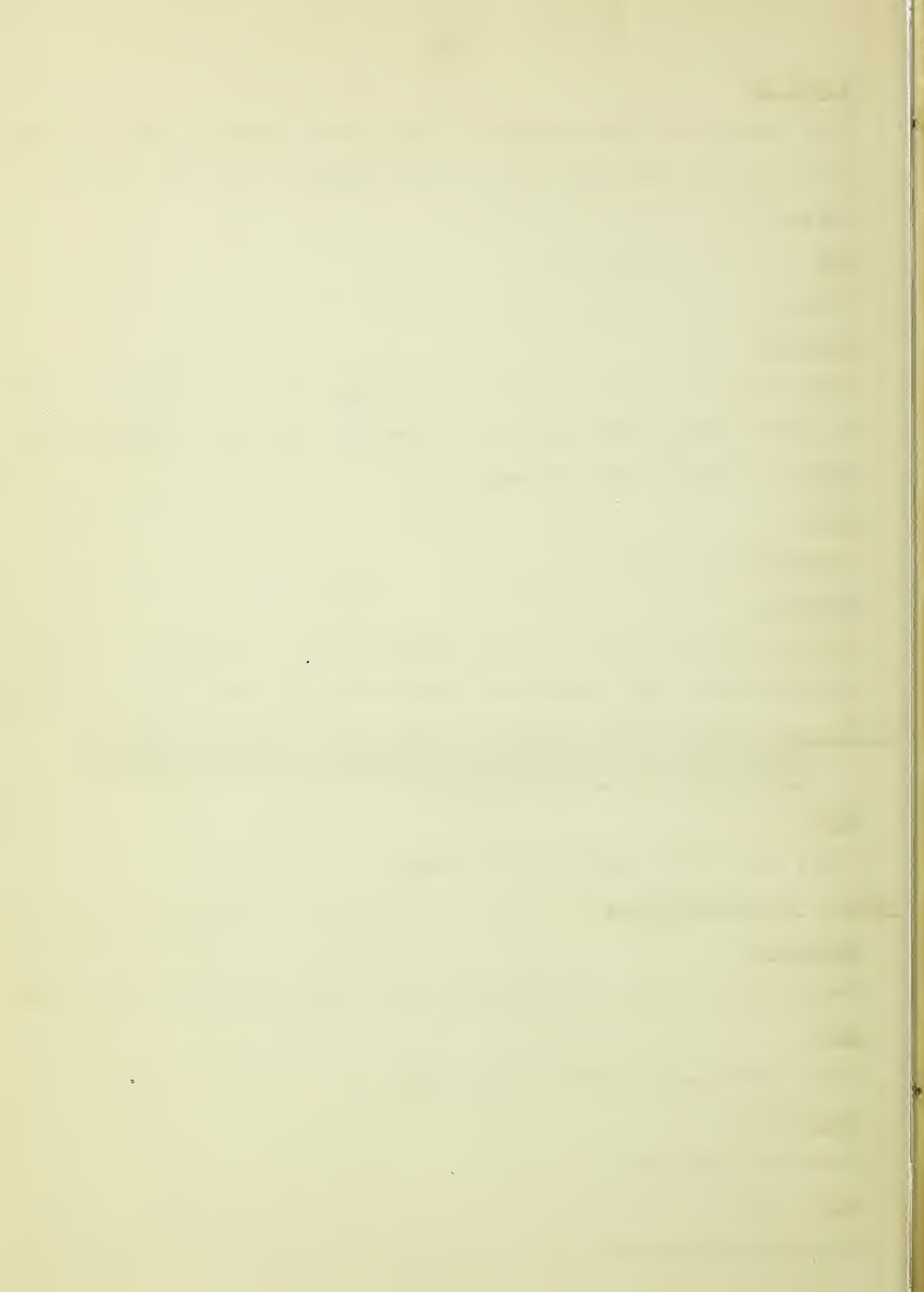
That oughta...but look at this one!

SECOND MAN

Clear as spring water!

MAC

What about this one?



WOODBURN

Why, that's off the meadow plot. Now take a look at this one from the rotation plot.

SECOND MAN

You mean this one here?

WOODBURN

Yes, this is...

SECOND MAN

...not so much silt here...

MAC

....still a little.

WOODBURN

You can see it has some silt in the water...

SECOND MAN

...but not nearly so much a s in that other...

WOODBURN

No, not as much a s that off the continuous corn plot.

SECOND MAN

That muddy water reminds me of my wife's coffee.

SOUND: Laughter and jeers.

SECOND MAN

No kidding...my wife makes good coffee.

MAC

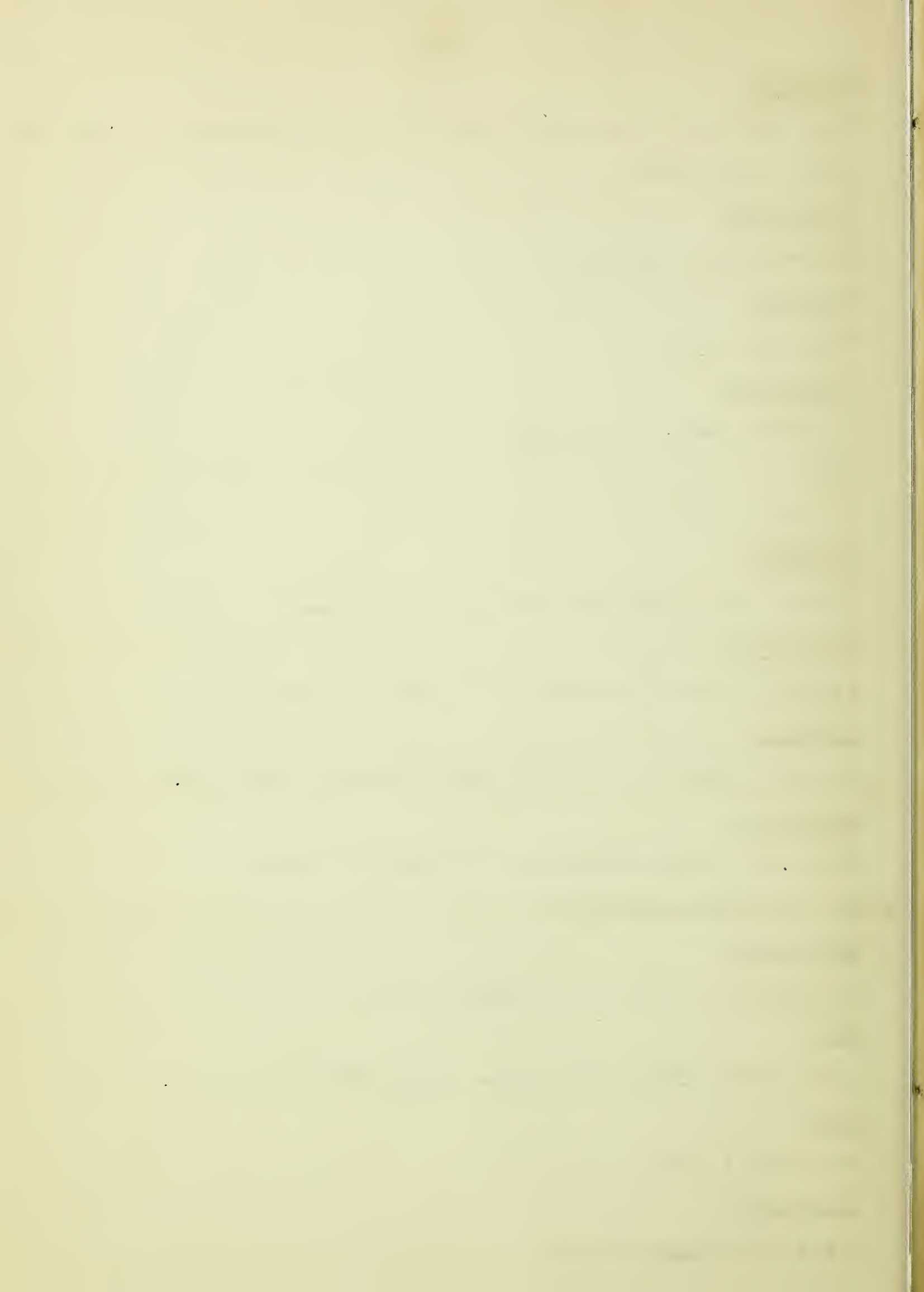
You'd better change your tune. John might tell on you.

JOHN

And could I tell!

SECOND MAN

Well, if you do...oh....



WOODBURN

What next?

MAC

How about contour strip cropping, Mr. Woodburn?

WOODBURN

How about dropping that Mister stuff?

MAC

Okay, Russell, But how about strip cropping?

WOODBURN

Well, if you wanta see that we'll hafta go over across the creek.

It'll be a little wet...

SECOND MAN

We're already wet...

SOUND: Shouts of "you mean, you are," "are you tellin' me" and "let's go."

WOODBURN

All right. Here we go!

SOUND: Men walking up concrete steps, and rain begins..men talking...

WOODBURN

All right, you asked for it. Here's where you see how strip cropping makes the rain behave!

ORGAN: SINGING IN THE RAIN. (OR...LET IT RAIN....)

ANNOUNCER

Managers of the 20-odd state farms draw a red line around the calendar on March 30, the day they studied the erosion control experiments and visited typical farms in the Salt Creek soil conservation demonstration area. They went home, home to their farms on which crops are grown as "occupational therapy"...but farms which wash just as readily as others on sloping land...





SOUND: Men slopping around in mud and wet grass.

BOY

Mr. Mac, these buffer strips are working. Look how the water slows up here in the grass.

MAC

Yeah, it sure does! By George, I'm glad we left these rye strips when we plowed this field this spring.

BOY

I guess we did right by sowing the grass and alfalfa in the rye.

MAC

Sure, sure. It's the fine grass and the little leaves and stems that hold the water...little leaves, little stems. Yes, they hold back the raindrops. And here are ten billion little dams!

ORGAN: BLUE SKIES.

ANNOUNCER

And so soil conservation came to N. C. McLeod and the farmlands of the Boys' Industrial School near Lancaster, Ohio, and it's coming to each of the other state farms in Ohio. But now, here is Ewing Jones of the Soil Conservation Service, in Dayton, Ohio.

JONES

What do you mean, but now? You were going along in a happy theme and then....but now, Ewing Jones.

ANNOUNCER

Well, Ewing, I was afraid that you were going to offer a bulletin, just for a change.

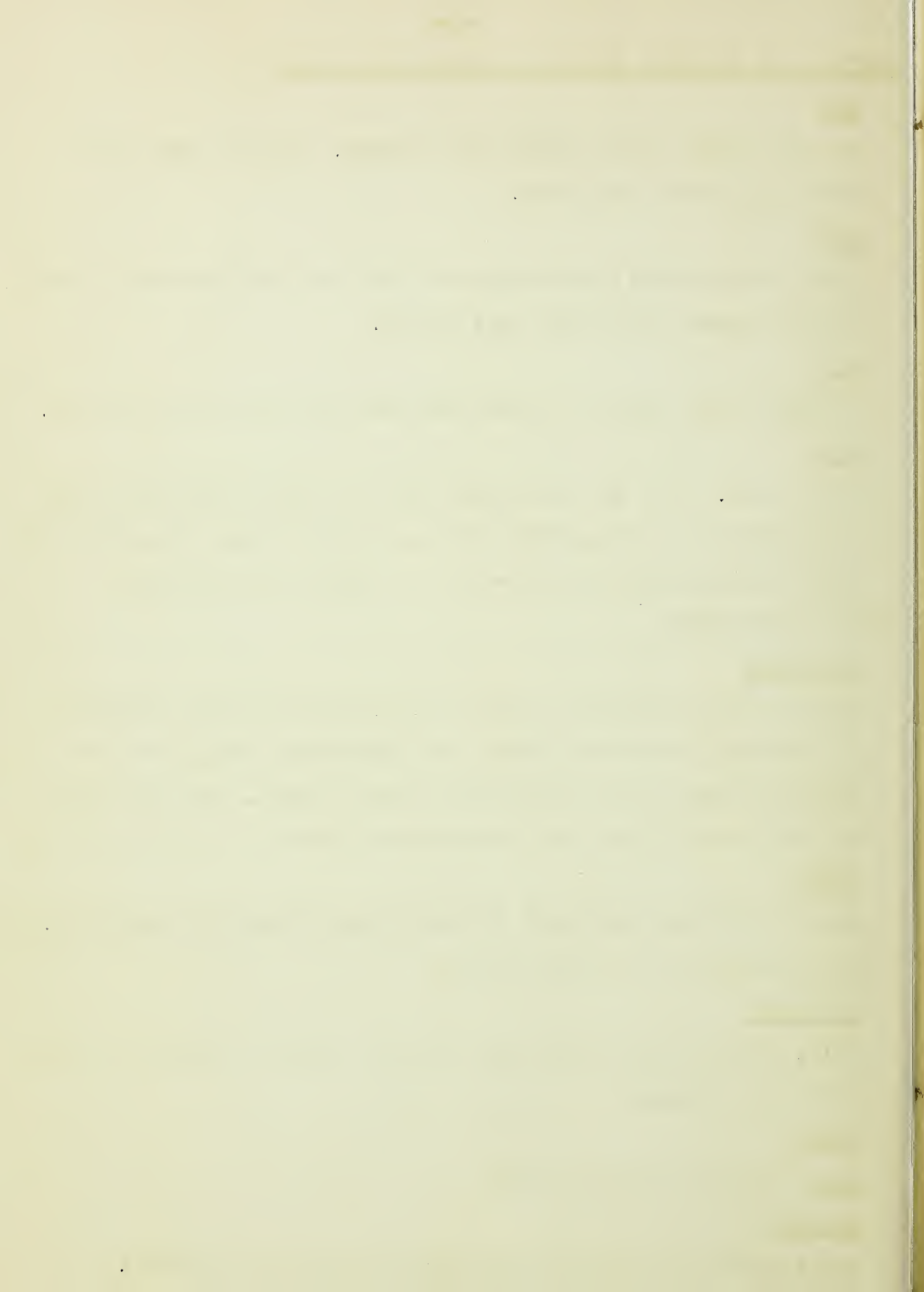
JONES

Just for that I think I will.

HERRMAN

And I think you won't, because we've business to transact.





JONES

Oh, pardon me. \_\_\_\_\_, this is David T. Herrman, state coordinator of the Soil Conservation Service.

ANNOUNCER

Hello, Mr. Herrman. Don't I remember you from somewhere?

HERRMAN

Well, I used to be county agricultural agent in Butler County.

ANNOUNCER

Oh, that's where it was.

JONES

Hey, wait a minute, Dave, weren't you the fellow who said we had business to transact?

HERRMAN

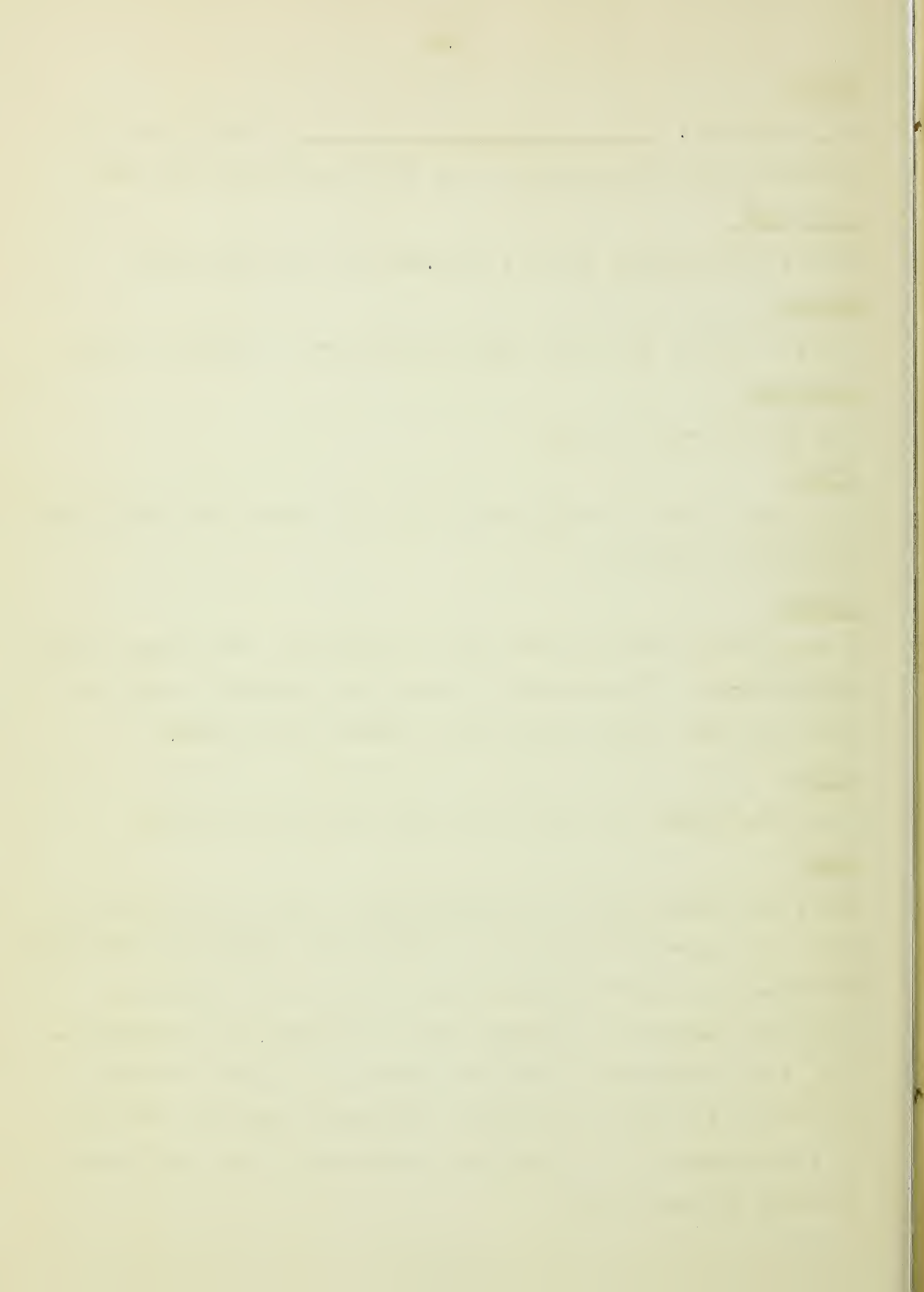
I was, Ewing, and let's get down to business. John Bragg, chief agriculturist of Ohio's state farms, has consented to tell us about the soil conservation work on these state farms.

JONES

Fine, Mr. Bragg. We want to hear the rest of the story.

BRAGG

Well, Mr. Jones, the first thing I want to say is that I'm just here as a representative of 40 or 50 men who manage the farmlands of these state institutions. Among them are farm managers, vegetable gardeners, dairymen, horticulturists, and poultrymen. Yes, I am interested in soil conservation. I don't know why I didn't see the need of it sooner, but these other men are just as interested in it as I am and I want them to have the credit for what is being done.



HERRMAN

John is right there, Ewing, I can vouch for that. I've been on some of these farms this year. I've seen the contour buffer strips that Mr. McLeod laid out on his own initiative at the Boys' Industrial School at Lancaster. He laid out the contour lines with an ordinary straight edge and a carpenter's level. And he did it because he had seen how contour farming was preventing erosion on some of the farms in the Salt Creek project area near Zanesville.

JONES

But, to go back a little, Mr. Bragg, just how did you and the farm managers get started on this soil conservation program of yours?

BRAGG

One of the Soil Conservation Service men up at the Wooster project remarked to me one day that we ought to do something about those gullies on the Apple Creek farm in Wayne County. I welcomed the idea, and they laid out our fields for contour strip cropping. And they also helped us control the gullies.

JONES

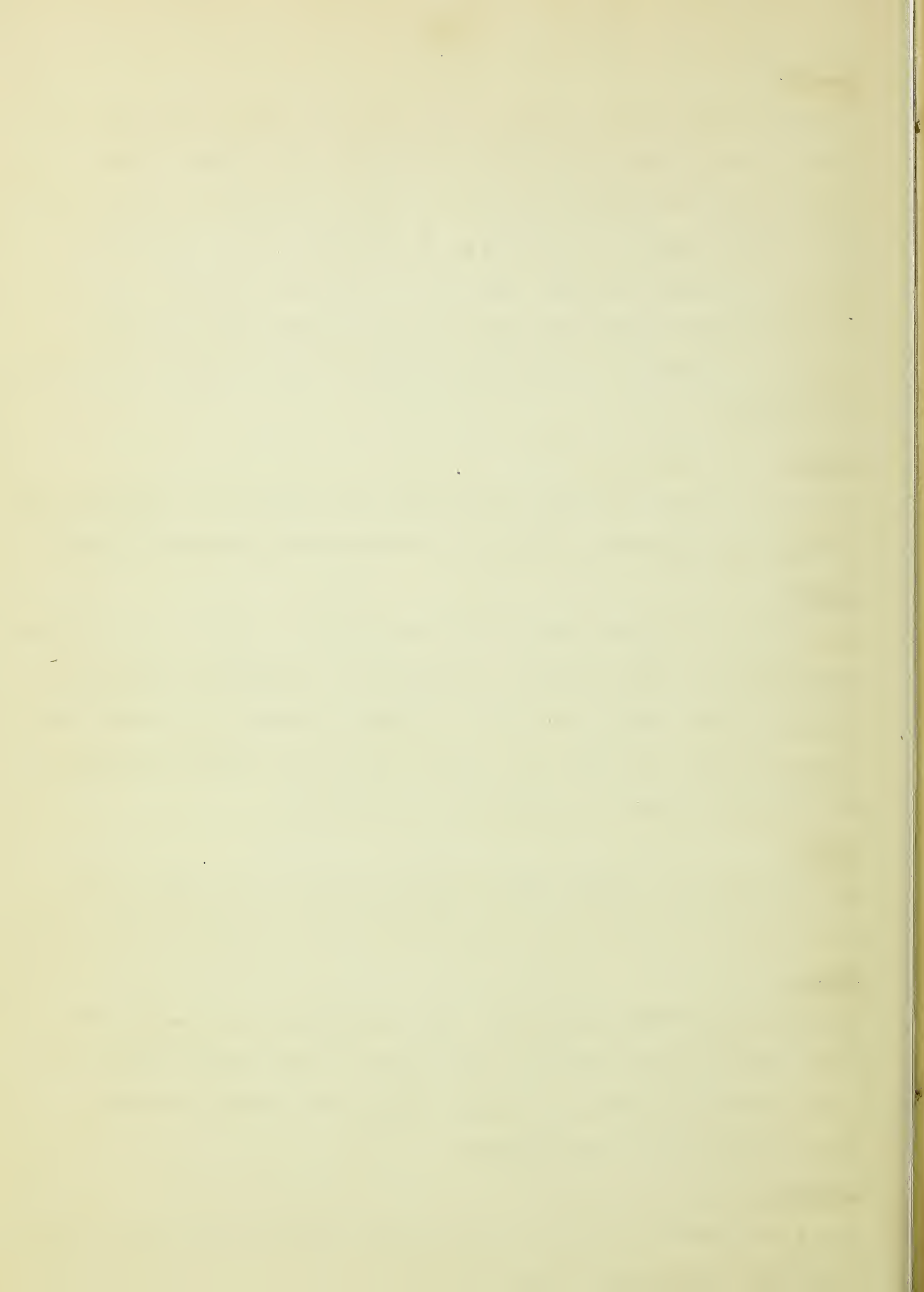
And how did the erosion control idea spread to the other state farms?

BRAGG

We were all getting interested in controlling erosion, because we'd heard so much about it, but a part of the credit belongs to a man known by thousands of Ohio Valley farmers--Leo Rummell, field editor of the Ohio Farmer.

HERRMAN

Well, I'd expect Leo to be in on a good thing but how did he come into this particular picture?



BRAGG

Leo and I were driving through the country one day, talking about crops and soil conservation and everything else, when he remarked, "You should have all your farm managers go to Zanesville and see the erosion control work being done there."

HERRMAN

Knowing Leo, I can understand that he would be thinking that way.

BRAGG

And the next thing I knew, Dave, you and I were planning the meeting at Zanesville.

JONES

And now that you've started to treat these state farms for soil conservation, what's your program, Mr. Bragg?

BRAGG

Our goal for 1938 was to plan one of the farms completely--as a demonstration to all the other managers. We've accomplished that much by putting into effect the beginning of a five-year erosion control plan on the TB sanatorium at Mt. Vernon.

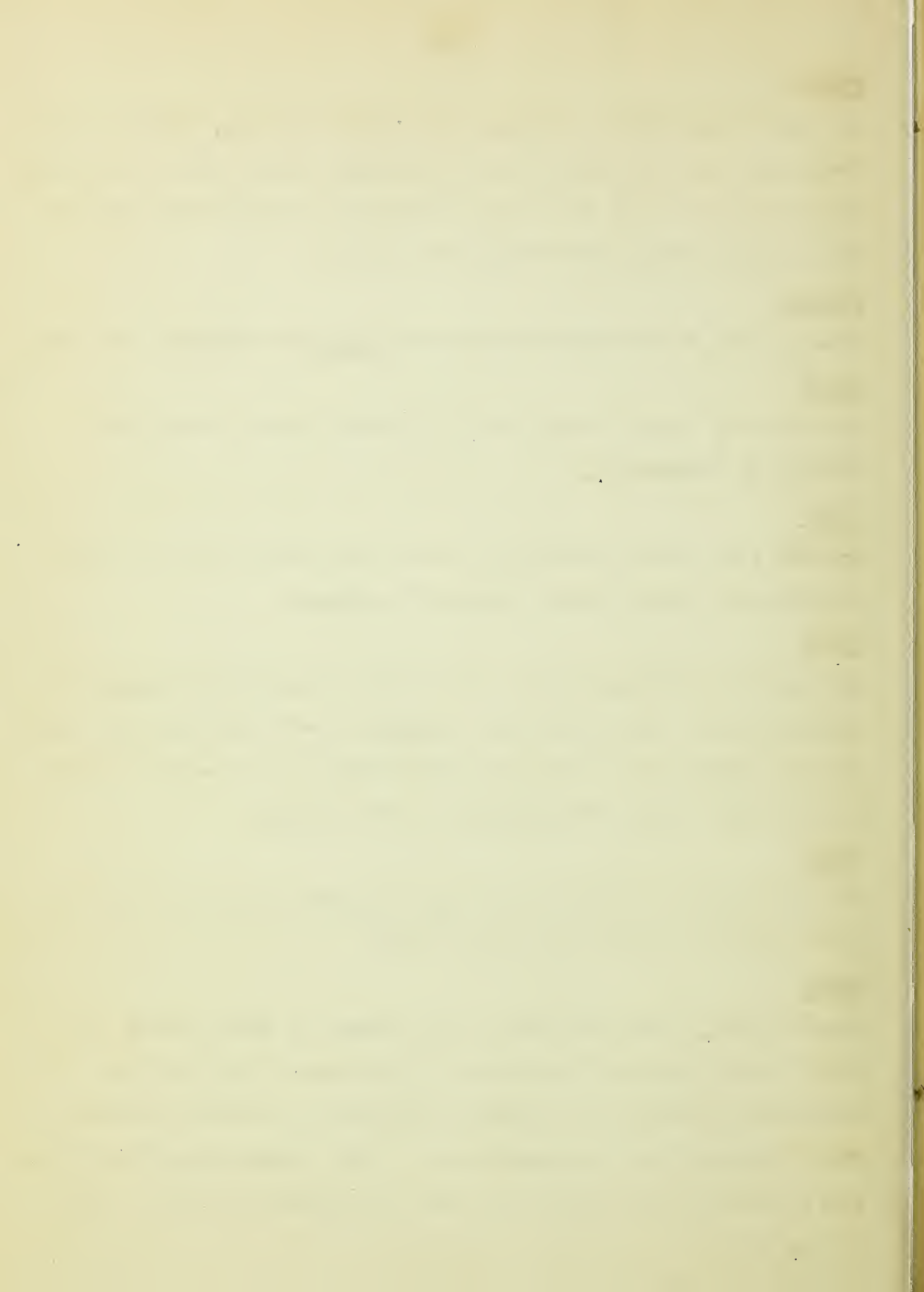
JONES

And your plan is for the other farm managers to come and see how you've done it at the Mt. Vernon farm?

BRAGG

That's right. The farm there is in charge of James Riley. At every other farm we've done what is necessary to get set for completely planning the farming operations to control erosion. We're planning our plowing--looking to the future and, believe me, I'm so sold on the whole thing that you couldn't get me to give it up.







HERRMAN

Well, John, what have you done on the Apple Creek farm?

BRAGG

Well, the boys there laid out one badly gullied field for contour strip cropping. They also did some control work on the gullies. But that's not the only farm that has passed the planning stage. At the state hospital at Dayton, Floyd Workman, the farm manager, and Jesse Gilliland, the gardener, strip cropped potatoes with alfalfa. They double seeded some of the worst gullies and will leave them in sod as natural waterways. Some of the farms have controlled small gullies by the use of sod bags and at...

HERRMAN

What did they use in those sod bags?

BRAGG

They just mixed a grass seed mixture with a small amount of dirt in burlap sacks and laid them in the gullies. When the grass seed sprouted and formed a little sod, they had a lot of living dams that held even when run-off water came down the gully.

JONES

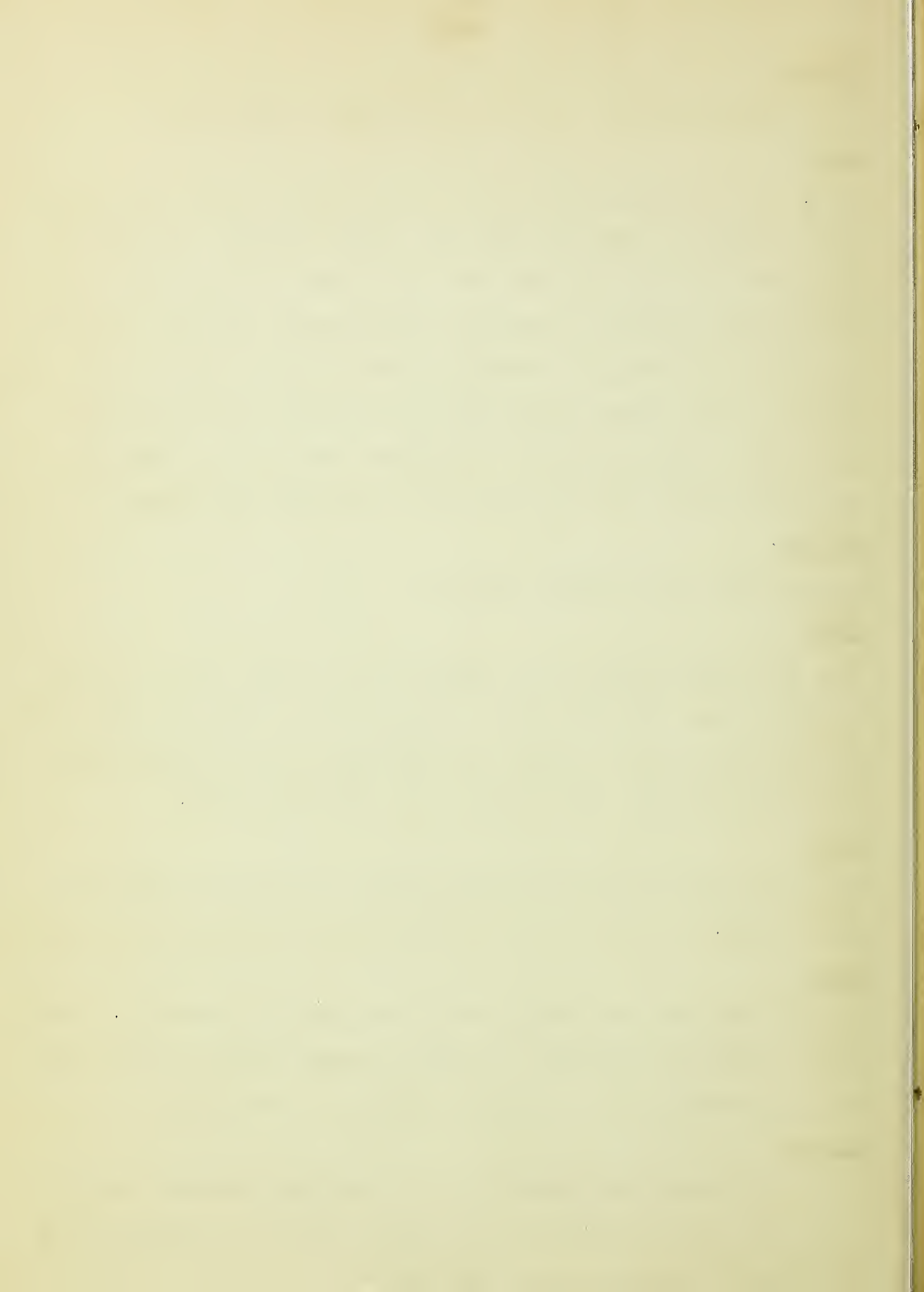
Apparently your farm managers are pretty enthusiastic about the whole thing.

BRAGG

You bet they are, Mr. Jones, and let me tell you something. There isn't a drill row of wheat on these 22 state farms this fall that isn't as nearly on the contour as the men can make it.

HERRMAN

I like that idea about planting on the contour, because that is one of the first fundamentals of erosion control on sloping land. I'm satisfied you're on the right track.



BRAGG

Now, don't give me the credit. Remember, the farm managers have been doing this pretty much on their own.

JONES

Wait just a minute, I have one more question to ask. What about land use? That's another of the fundamentals...

BRAGG

The men understand that, too, and they've taken some land out of cultivation and put it to permanent pasture or meadow. The Apple Creek farm planted 40,000 young pine trees on badly eroded land this year. Then we're draining some of the flat, wet land so it can be cropped, and we can take some of the steeper land out of cultivation.

JONES

It looks, by and large, as if you're well on the road toward sound soil-saving practices.

BRAGG

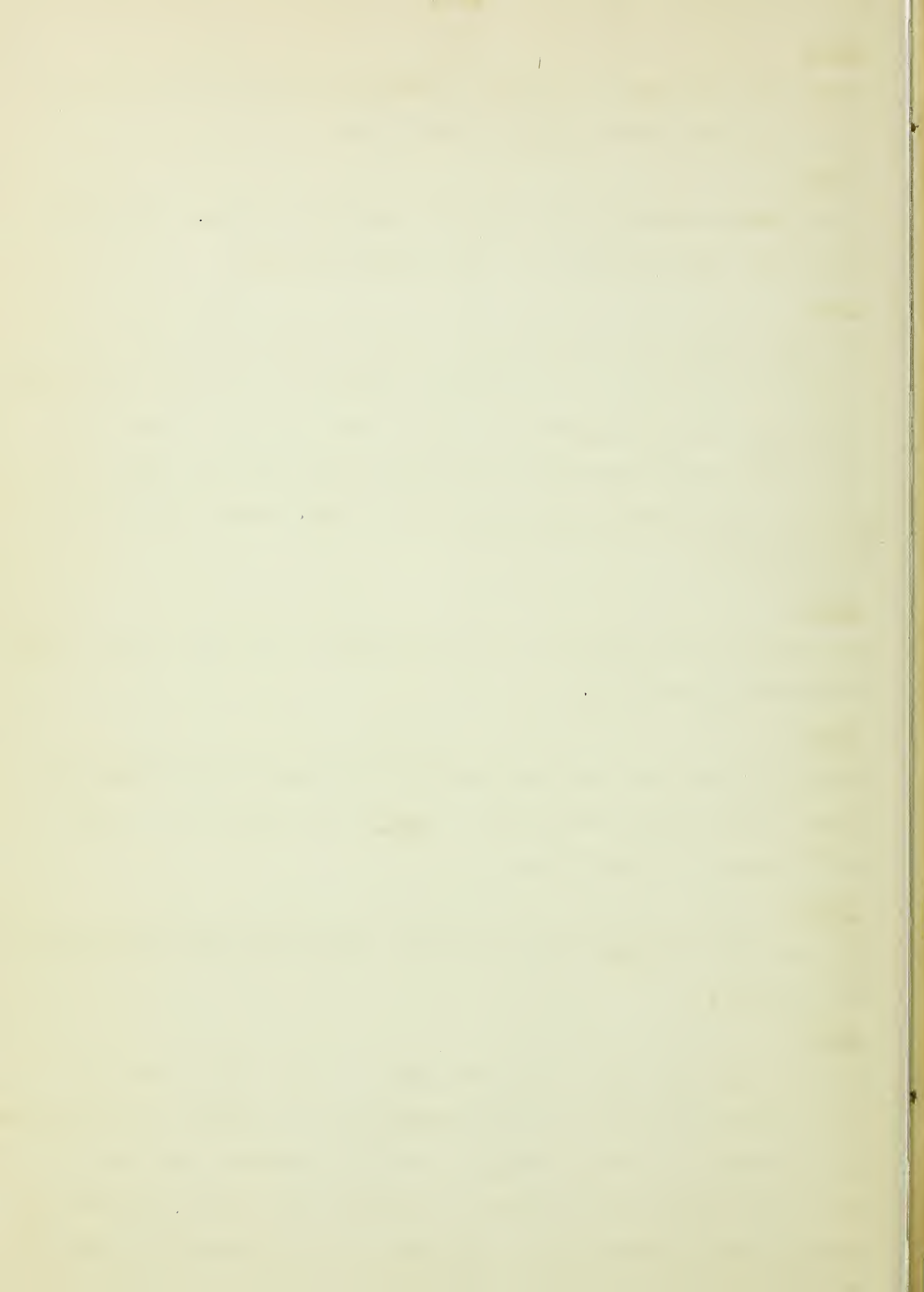
Well, did you ever hear the story of the rabbit that climbed the tree? We're in the same fix. We have to do something to stop soil washing on these farms.

JONES

I'd say that you are doing something, judging by your description of the work.

BRAGG

There's just one other thing I'd like to say. You in the Soil Conservation Service are establishing erosion control demonstrations on thousands of farms. Well, we haven't forgotten that idea on the state farms here in Ohio. In another year or two visitors at each of our 22 farms can see the best of soil conservation methods in actual practice.



JONES

And I for one want to accept that invitation. And thank you, John Bragg, chief agriculturist of Ohio state farms, for this information, and thank you, too, David T. Herrman, Ohio state coordinator of the Soil Conservation Service. One radio station was closed the next day after Dave took part in one of their programs, and perhaps that's my cue to say goodbye until next week.

ANNOUNCER

Next week, Neighborly Cooperation in Illinois...

SOUND: Thunder, followed by rain...

ANNOUNCER

Fortunes Washed Away is an educational presentation of the Nation's Station.

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